

Message Text

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E.O. 11652 : N/A

TAGS : OEXC, NI

SUBJ : STAG : MRS. WHITNEY M. YOUNG, JR.

SUMMARY: MRS. WHITNEY M. YOUNG, JR. DESCRIBED HER NIGERIA VISIT AND DEDICATION USIS WHITNEY M. YOUNG, JR. LIBRARY AS "THE MISSING LINK" IN HER LIFE AND AS THE "TURNING POINT" FROM WHICH SHE COULD "GO ON." MRS. YOUNG SAID REPEATEDLY DURING HER WEEK LONG VISIT THAT SHE HAD KNOWN SHE "WOULD HAVE TO COME TO NIGERIA ONE DAY TO

FIND THE CONNECTION, THE MISSING LINK, BETWEEN MARCH 11, 1971 (THE DAY ON WHICH MR. YOUNG DIED) AND THE PRESENT." "THE DEDICATION OF THE LIBRARY," SHE SAID, "AFFORDED THIS OPPORTUNITY." HER VISIT WAS, IN EVERY SENSE, AN HISTORICAL ONE. NIGERIANS AND AMERICANS SAW A COURAGEOUS WOMEN PAUSE MOMENTARILY TO REFLECT ON A RICHLY SHARED LIFE AND EXPERIENCE. THEY SAW AND HEAD HER COLLECTING THE REMAINS OF THESE MEMORIES AND CONTINUING WITH THE RENEWED HOPE AND CONFIDENCE THAT THE EXPERIENCE ENGENDERED. THE NIGERIAN MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, IN REPLY TO AN EMBASSY NOTE REGARDING MRS. YOUNG'S VISIT, SAID BEGIN QUOTE "THE DISTINGUISHED

GUEST SHOULD BE ASSURED OF A WARM WELCOME IN NIGERIA"END QUOTE.

MRS. YOUNG RECEIVED THIS WARM WELCOME.

PARTICIPATING IN THE DEDICATION CEREMONY WERE THE FEDERAL
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COMMISSIONER FOR INFORMATION AND LABOR, CHIEF ANTHONY ENAHORO

(WHO DELIVERED THE MEMORIAL TRIBUTE), THE AMBASSADOR, THE PAO, CAO, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS.

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS IN HER HONOR INCLUDED DINNER AT THE RESIDENCE, LUNCHEON AT THE PAO'S RESIDENCE, DINNER AT THE CAO'S RESIDENCE, TEA AT THE RESIDENCE OF THE MILITARY GOVERNOR OF LAGOS STATE (BRIGADIER MOBOLAJI JOHNSON) COFFEE AT THE RESIDENCE OF UNILAG VICE CHANCELLOR AJAYI, AND A TEA/CULTURAL DANCE AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM HOSTED BY LOCAL AAI REPRESENTATIVE.

THESE EVENTS ATTRACTED SUCH VIPS AS THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE FEDERATION, FEDERAL AND STATE COMMISSIONERS, AND NUMEROUS OTHER OUTSTANDING PERSONALITIES FROM THE NIGERIAN SCENE.

MEDIA COVERAGE INCLUDED A VOA INTERVIEW, A FILMED/TAPED INTERVIEW FOR RKTU BY MRS. MARTHA AUDU (SISTER OF HEAD OF STATE) WHO CAME TO LAGOS FROM KADUNA EXPRESSLY FOR THE PURPOSE, NBC TELEVISION AND RADIO INTERVIEWS AND SEVERAL ARTICLES IN LOCAL PAPERS.

EMBASSY ALSO BENEFITTED FROM PHILIP MORRIS (PM) SEGMENT PROGRAM. THIS SEGMENT INCLUDED A DINNER, A DAY'S VISIT TO ILORIN (KWARA STATE) WHERE PM HAS FACTORY, A BRIEFING, AND A LUNCHEON. AGAINST BIG BUSINESS BACKDROP, MRS. YOUNG EMERGED AS ONLY WOMAN AND ONLY BLACK ON PM'S 20-MEMBER BOARD DIRECTORS. SHE EMERGED AS HUMANIST WHO BELIEVES WITH CONVICTION THAT IT IS HER ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE BIG BUSINESS MORE SENSITIVE TO ITS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND THEREBY IMPROVE ITS FUNCTION AND IMAGE. HER BUSINESS ROLE AFFORDED AN INTERESTING COMMENTARY ON THE AMERICAN SCENE AND WAS A FITTING TRIBUTE TO THE EFFORTS OF HER LATE HUSBAND IN THIS AREA.

WHEREVER MARGARET YOUNG WENT, SHE WAS WELL RECEIVED AND SHOWERED WITH GIFTS. WHETHER IN ALMOST CHILD-LIKE AWE OF THE REGALLY ATTIRED EMIR OF ILORIN SURROUNDED BY HIS ENTOURAGE, WHETHER BEING BRIEFED ON PROGRESS OF KWARA STATE BY MILITARY GOVERNOR BAMIGBOYE, OR WHETHER TAKING TIME OUT TO CHAT WITH SCHOOL CHILDREN ALONG THE ROAD (AND GIVING THEM BOOKS), MRS. YOUNG EXEMPLIFIED WARMTH, CONCERN, DIGNITY AND CHARM THAT IS SELDOM EQUALLED.

SHE REPRESENTED HER COUNTRY AS AN AMBASSADOR OF GOOD WILL WITH KEEN SENSITIVITY AND INTELLIGENCE. SHE SHARED WITH ALL SHE MET THE
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SPECIAL AND HUMANE WHITNEY/MARGARET YOUNG PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE. SHE LEFT IN NIGERIA AN IMPRESSION NOT SOON TO BE FORGOTTEN.
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